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DEPT FOR SCA/CEN, OES/STC FOR EILEEN KANE

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: TSPL AMGT UZ  
SUBJECT: EMBASSY SCIENCE FELLOWS PROGRAM - 2008 (TASHKENT)

REF: STATE 28712

¶1. (U) Per reftel, Post requests the temporary posting of an Embassy Science Fellow to Embassy Tashkent for approximately six weeks in September-October 2008. No medical or security clearance is required. If approved for participation in the program, Post commits to provide housing, office support, in-country travel arrangements, and other logistical support as required, barring any unexpected reductions in Post funding. The points of contact for substantive questions about this request are Political Officer Steven Prohaska, tel: 998-71-120-5450, email: prohaskasn@state.gov, and Environmental Affairs Specialist Bakhtiyor Mukhamadiev, tel: 998-71-120-5450, email: mukhamadievbr@state.gov. Management-related questions may be directed to Management Chief Doug Ellrich, tel: 998-71-120-5450, email: ellrichdk@state.gov.

¶2. (U) Post has discussed the Embassy Science Fellows program with Dr. Guy Fipps, Director of the Irrigation Technology Center and Professor and Extension Agricultural Engineer at Texas A&M University. Dr. Fipps has deep expertise in irrigation technology, water and salinity management, water resources engineering, and irrigation scheme management and rehabilitation. Dr. Fipps has worked extensively in regional water planning and management programs and has been a senior water advisor for Embassy Kabul. He has also worked closely with USAID and the Government of Afghanistan on water-related issues and drafted a memorandum of understanding between Afghanistan and Tajikistan on water cooperation. Post believes that Dr. Fipps would be an excellent choice for the Embassy Science Fellows Program, as his selection would allow him to apply his expertise on water management to Uzbekistan.

Post envisions Dr. Fipps providing assessments and recommendations on transboundary water issues related to the Amu Darya in light of recent developments in Afghanistan and Turkmenistan; assessing USAID projects on water management; conducting training for the Water Users' Association of USAID; giving presentations on his work; and meeting with the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination of Central Asia as well as Government of Uzbekistan officials on transboundary water matters. Transboundary water management a sensitive issue that the Government of Uzbekistan is keenly interested in, and has been a source of tension between the countries of Central Asia, so Dr. Fipps' interaction with Uzbek officials will be undertaken in close cooperation with the Embassy's Political/Economic Section, DCM, and Ambassador. In addition to benefiting USAID projects, Dr. Fipps' participation also would help to advance Post's efforts in establishing lasting relationships between Uzbek and American scientists.

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